

**SELECTED FINDINGS FROM EARLIER REPORTS ON FOREST MANAGEMENT****→ “An Evaluation of the Effects of the Forest Practices Act”, 1995**

Purpose: 1993 Legislature directed MFS to examine: the extent to which forest landowners are harvesting to minimum FPA standards; acreage, size, distribution of clearcuts; management of separation zones between clearcuts.

Results from 1995 study included here because the 1999 report on timber liquidation (see below) used these harvest sites and associated field data as part of its sample.

- 150 harvest sites in 136 towns randomly selected for sample. 131 sites visited.
- 84% of partial harvest acres sampled were “moderately to well stocked and demonstrated sound silvicultural planning.”
- 15% of the partial harvest acres sampled were “stocked with low quality residual stands”.
- High-grading to minimum FPA standards occurred on 8% of the partial harvest acres sampled. Ownership tenure not examined.
- High-grading occurred most frequently on small private ownerships. Further examination of this data revealed that logging contractors were responsible for most of this high-grading.

**→ Timber Liquidation in Maine (MFS study, 1999)**

- 428 harvest notifications from 1995 and 1996 selected for evaluation. Study sites from 1995 FPA evaluation also incorporated. Registry of Deeds research conducted to determine sales activity; Landowner Reports examined to determine harvest activity.
- The 1995-1996 data set indicated that liquidation harvesting occurs on 2.5% of harvest acres. Potential liquidation harvests were found on 11.7% of harvest acres. MFS estimated 11,800 acres of liquidation harvesting and 55,300 acres of potential liquidation harvesting (potential means lands that were purchased and harvested with little or no regard for impacts on future productivity, but not resold within the time frame of the study).
- The 1991-1993 data set indicated that liquidation harvesting occurs on 9.5% of all harvest acres. As the entire 5-year period had expired for this data set, the category of potential liquidation harvests was not applicable.
- Based on the findings, MFS estimated between 2.5% and 10% of all timber harvests in the state met the definition of liquidation harvesting (between 12,000 and 45,000 acres annually). The low end of the estimate reflects the fact that the 5-year period used to define liquidation harvesting had not elapsed at the time of the study.
- Liquidation harvesting conducted primarily by contractors or real estate brokers within the Small Private Landowner group. Most of the timber liquidation was attributed to a group of approximately 25 landowners.
- Liquidation harvests ranged in size from 10 acres to 4,000 acres. Nearly half of liquidation harvests are less than 100 acres in size, and 80% are 150 acres or smaller.
- Liquidation harvests retain some stocking of low-quality timber, and generally do not meet the definition of clearcuts under the Forest Practices Act.
- The majority of timber liquidations complete the cycle of buy, cut and sell within two years.

**→ MFS case study, Disposition of Forest Lands Formerly Owned by United Timberlands, 2001**

- Examined the breakup of 3,200 acres on 15 parcels in Buckfield. All 3,200 acres were enrolled in Tree Growth Tax program.
- Buckfield Timber LLC (McDonald Investments) acquired the land in 1999 through United Timberlands bankruptcy proceedings and by 2001 had sold all but 32 acres to 9 different owners.
- Five of the 9 new owners harvested 2,865 acres on 11 parcels. Two of the five owners who harvested sold 2,063 acres to 8 new owners.
- The original 3,200 acres are now owned by 15 different landowners. Virtually all of the original acreage has been harvested since 1999.